

To the members of the Government, Administration and Elections Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB 5050, An Act Concerning Modernizing Parking Signs for People with Disabilities. My name is Julie Erickson and I am the Senior VP at CCARC, Inc. at 950 Slater Road in New Britain, CT. CCARC, Inc. is a private, not for profit organization that provides supports and services for individuals with intellectual disabilities and other needs. They include residential homes, in-home supports, adult day services, employment supports and recreational programs. I live at 85 Hickory Hill Road in Kensington, CT. This bill would change the icon on the well-known accessibility signs from a stick-figure in a wheelchair to a figure leaning forward, showing movement. This suggests the independence and engagement of those with accessibility needs. The updated version also reflects the diverse community of people who use accessible parking, most of whom do not use wheelchairs but nevertheless have accessibility needs.

The bigger purpose is to change ATTITUDES of the general public towards people with accessibility needs. The word "handicapped" should be replaced by "reserved" for parking signs because "handicapped" is offensive to many. It indicates helplessness and those with accessibility needs are anything but helpless. The new signs would not cost taxpayers anything extra. The new signs would only be used for new construction or to replace older, worn-out signs. Please vote in favor of this bill. Thank you very much for your support! If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 860-229-6665 (work) or 860-335-1566 (cell).

Sincerely,

Julie Erickson